

Grandala

Cover Page



The cover page of our Dec 2024 issue of Vedanta Sandesh is a dazzling blue colored bird of the high altitude habitats of Himalayas - called the Grandala (Grandala coelicolor).

Often seen swirling in flocks above mountain passes, scrubby alpine forests, and highland meadows, this large thrush is unlike any other. Adult male is a deep, almost eye-searing blue with jet-black wings. Females and immatures are brown with white streaks all over the head and underparts and weak white bars on the wings. Long-billed and sharp-winged profile, along with flocking behavior, is more reminiscent of starlings than thrushes. A large flock of dazzling blue birds sitting atop a rocky slope in the high Himalayas is a sight for sore eyes. These very social birds do everything as a collective unit. They eat together, perch together, fly and migrate in flocks, only splitting into pairs when it is time to breed.

Indeed a vibhooti of God, a joy to see and sing HIS glories. Clicked by an avid bird lover Kallol Majumder in Nov this year.

Om Tat Sat.





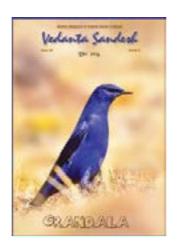
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Editor Swamini Samatananda Saraswati



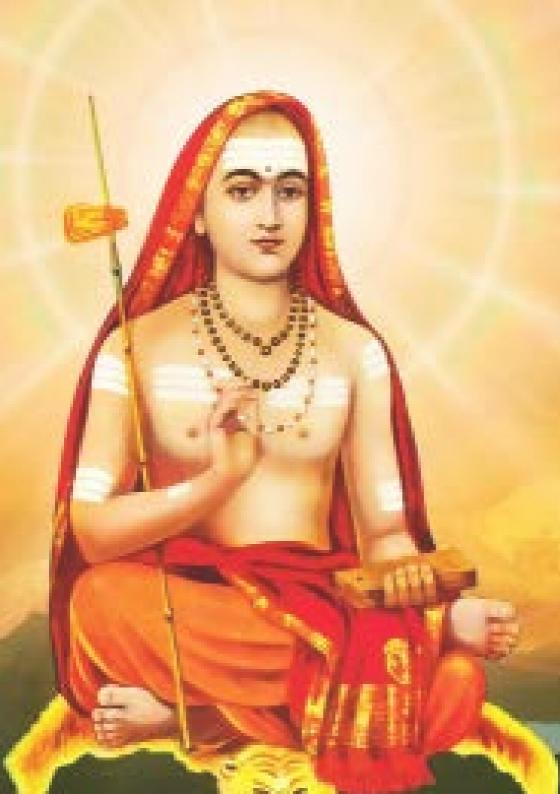
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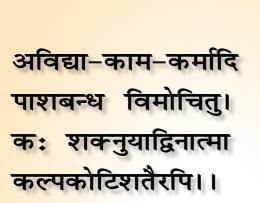


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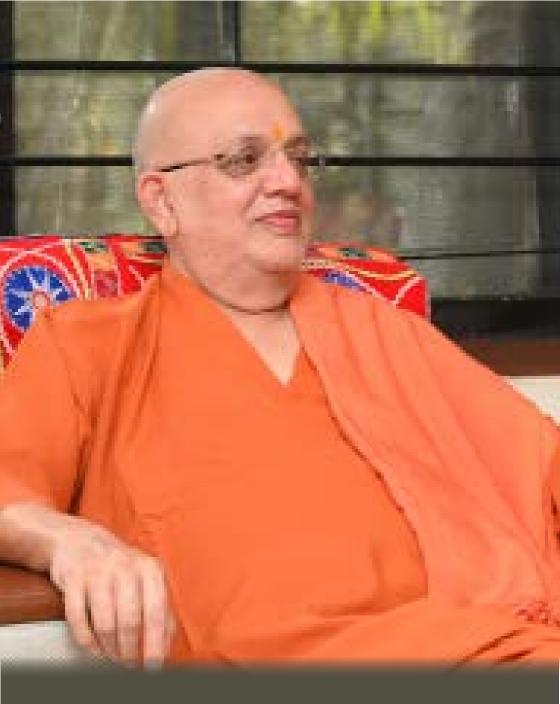
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Who else, but oneself can help rid oneself of the bondage caused by the chains of ignorance, desire, action, etc.—even in a hundreds of millions of years?





Message from Poojya Guruji

PARA-PRAKRUTI - THE DOOR TO SELF REALIZATION



Brahman is not an object of perception, it is the very subject because of which we are conscious of the various perceptions and experiences. Yet we need direct knowledge of it. So Lord Krishna shows us the way to realize the truth. He says look at nature -

Para-Prabruti - the door to Self-Realization

the Prakruti. It is my creation, and 'I' its creator is present in & through everything which exists. Sensitive and Intelligent people can get a good idea about the creator just by seeing the creation. In the seventh chapter



of Bhagwad Gita Bhagwan himself tells us how and what all we can see in the creation around so that its deeper truth, the inherent divinity is appreciated.

Apara & Para Prakruti

On the face of it prakruti is one expanse of nature pervading and encompassing the entire gamut of infinite time, space & objects we see around. It looks like one grand symphony, yet closer observation shows nature is basically comprised of two things, some aspect is inert while some are conscious. Just as a person has a physical personality and also his / her love, knowledge and other unique acumen. The latter is not easily visible but is the real essence of the person, so also with everything else, there is an aspect in everything which constitutes its real essence. Becoming conscious of it leads us to deeper truths of the thing / person. That aspect is called the Para-Prakruti while Apara constitutes its physical aspects.

Para-Prakruti is Jeeva

Capacity to be conscious of the

Para-Prakruti aspect of anything is important because that is what Jeeva is in every living thing. In

inert it is that which helps to make the thing what it is. Let us remember that Vedanta tells us that Tat Tvam Asi, meaning this Jeeva is Ishwara. So we not only meditate on the real truth of ourselves but need to see the meaning of word Jeeva with reference to all other manifestations too. Our Atma, the 'I' is not confined to our body & mind only but what Vedanta is revealing is that we alone are in all. Atma is our truth, but is also the truth of all that is. Ayam Atma Brahman. We need to appreciate the meaning of Jeeva in all manifestations. Really speak-

ing we alone exist as Jeeva in all beings - as their Pa-

ra-Prakruti.

Mahavakya Analysis

When the famous Mahavakya - Tat Tvam

Para-Prabruti - the door to Self-Realization

Asi, says that this Jeeva is Ishwara, then on its face value there are so many questions as to how can this small limited entity be equated with Ishwara. So that Acharyas tells us that the way forward is vivek of both these manifestations. Brahman has as though donned upadhis to present himself as Ishwara, and so has Jeeva. There is what is called the Vachyartha of both, and there is the deeper Lakshyartha of both too. The first is the perceptual meaning, as it appears to our senses, and the other is the real, the truth of them. Before we realize the Lakshyartha of them, the first step obviously is to first see Jeeva as it is manifested. That is the

objective of this vivek of Apara and Para Prakruti. We sieve out the superficial from the significant and

Vivek of Apara-Para Prakruti is starting from where we stand appreciate the Para-Prakruti or Jeeva as it is. Once we can see the Jeeva of all and in all, then we start the vivek of separating the ephemeral aspect from its permanent aspect and realize the substratum. Basically we negate the superimposed dharma of upadhis from every manifestation.

Atma is Brahman

It is not enough to appreciate oneself as conscious existence but also realize that this self-effulgent divinity is all-pervasive, all-encompassing and all-embracing. I am

not limited to this Body & Mind but I a alone am as the effulgence in Sun, the Rasa in Water etc.

That is the ultimate objective of Apara & Para-Prakru-

ti Vivek.

Om Tat Sat



Swamini Samatananda

Shloka - 25



अशंगो शिच्चदानन्दः श्वप्रभो द्वेतवर्जितः। अश्मीति शब्दविद्धोऽयं समाधिः शविकल्पकः॥

I am unattached, Existence-Consciousness
-Bliss self-shining, free from duality, this is the practice of meditation with duality associated with words.

DRIG DRISHYA VIVEKA



In the ongoing verses the Revered Acharya is speaking of the Antar Hridi Samadhi. In this hridi Samadhi or Antar Samadhi two kinds of Samadhi are under discussion. One is Savikalpa Samadhi and the other is Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In Savikalpa Samadhi the Acharya has prescribed two kinds of Samadhi-One is the Drishyanuviddha Savikalpa Samadhi which was explained in the

previous shoka. The second is Shabdanuviddh Savikalpa Samadhi which the Acharya has explained in the following verse.

Understanding Drishyanuviddh Samadhi in the previous shloka I focused on Consciousness as the Sakshi of the ongoing flow of thoughts. In this practise the thoughts became a medium to direct our attention to the Sakshi. The Sakshi chaitanya is the detached uninvolved witness to the flow of thoughts. Repeated practise of bringing the Mind from the thoughts to the Sakshi Chaitanya helps in getting established in this state of being a Sakshi, rather than being distracted and influenced by the various thoughts, coming and

going. Once one gets established in the state of being an uninvolved witness that is the Sakshi, then alone one is available to dive Scriptures have a unique method of helping us awaken deeper into understanding the Sakshi Chaitanya, itself. This is the nature of Samadhi explained in this verse, to dive into the secrets of the Sakshi with the aide of Scriptural pointers.

Asangah Sacchidanandah..:

Words of the Scriptures act as pointers to reveal the nature of the Sakshi. Although one must clearly understand here that Consciousness cannot be described objectively as it is not an object of perception. Neither can it be defined by words, because that alone can be defined wich is fragmented, limited and has attributes. Rather it is a state of awakening wherein one awakens by knowledge alone. For this awakening too, the Scriptures have a unique method of helping us awaken to that state and also get established in it. This is brought about using Scriptural pointers.

Pointers are known as 'Lakshanas' in the Scriptures. These pointers are of three types. The Tatasth lakshana, Swaroop lakshana and Nishedh lakshana. Here in this verse too, the Teacher has used these three types of pointers.

Asangah: The Sakshi is
Asangah i.e. it is totally
unattached. This pointer
is a nishedh lakshana i.e.
it is a pointer that negates
all identifications which
have been superimposed
upon it. Our identifications
are with the body, mind and intellect. Identification with the BMI
brings about a fragmented existence

and the dellusory existence of 'Me' and 'Mine'. Identification with the limited BMI gives birth to a sense of enjoyership and doership entangling the Jiva on a journey of eternal seeking. The ultimate truth being that there is no real existence of this limited entity whom we perceive to be the 'I'. This awakening is brought about by seeing the transitory and ephimeral nature of the body, mind and intellect and seeing that even though the body, mind and intellect go through various changes, ups and down but yet the Atma remains untouched and unchanged. Thus seeing the illusory nature of the body, mind and intellect one negates them as a product of Maya and that which remains untouched and un-

attached is the pure 'I' which is of the nature of pure existence, consciousness and bliss. In

Seeing the illusory nature negates the thing

this manner one meditates upon the pointer 'Asangah' to negate the superimposition of the Anatma on the Sakshi chaitanya.

Sachidananda:

Having negated the superimpositions of the Anatma what remains is not a void or a vaccum of nothingness but it is the Atma which is of the nature of Sat-Chit & Ananda. Thus, the next pointer or lakshana which the Acharya speaks of is the Swaroop lakshana. This pointer that the Atman is of the nature of Sat-Chit-Ananda is a swaroop lakshana. Sat is that which exists at all times. Chit is the consciousness that enlivens—and en-

lightens all that exists therefore I the Sakshi is aware of all that is born in time and space and Ananda is that dimension of my existence which is limitless, unconditional pure existence. Here Ananda does not re-



fer to the experiential ananda which is dependent upon some external conditional experience. But I am of the nature of Ananda reveals that state where there is no sense of enjoyership, no sense of doership, wherein the triputi of the bhokta-bhojya and bhog has been negated and what remains is a pure, limitless and conscous state of existence.

Swaprabho: 'I' the Sakshi Chaitanya is self effulgent. I do not require any external source of light to reveal my presence but it is the 'I' the Sakshi that enlightens the presence of all worldly objects and experiences.

Dwaitavarjitah: Consciousness is beyond the limitations of object, time and space. It is infact the substratum where in the entire play of object, time and space as though appears to be.

The Acharya thus gives to us some samples of practising shabdanuviddh savikalpa samadhi.



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The Art Of Man Making

Meet Chapter VII

P.P. Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji

THE ART OF MAN MAKING

his seventh discourse is a very pithy one, rich with some rare spiritual information, and it has a special depth of vision. Very often, students miss the subtle significance of this meaningful discourse.

The entire discourse opons with a very legitimate doubt a student may have if he has followed closely the thoughts in the previous discourse on meditation.

The Art of Man Making

We have heard that the Infinite Truth can be realised through meditation. The student can rightly doubt how the finite intellect and mind can ever realise the Infinite. Such a claim seems quite exaggerated.

This chapter starts with a promise that the Geeta Acharya will clear this doubt by proving this possible. And the Lord gives here both the speculative theory and the practical methods by which this can be accomplished as an intimate experience in life.

Some of the most splendid attempts made in our spiritual literature to express the Inexpressible are found in this chapter. The subtle poetry of Vyasa soars to stupendou

heights, only to make his chosen words cascade from there, in voiceless beauty, generating in us

Words of Vyasa cascade in voiceless beauty

The Art of Man Making

waves of thrills-understanding and wisdom, perception and recognition of the Supreme Lord of the Universe.

It is the uniqueness of the Hindu scriptures that we have therein both the Pure Science and the Applied Science of Reality. The Vedas expound a very adequate scientific theory in their philosophical portion called the Upanishads, and also many technical methods by which the beauties of life's possibilities discussed herein can be brought about in our personal lives.

Pure philosophical knowledge is called gyanam and the technical knowledge of how to implement the philosophy in life is called vi-gyanam. Since both these

Taking refuge in Me, practise Meditation are discussed exhaus- tively in this chapter, it is entitled Gyana-Vigyana Yoga.

In the concluding portions we have a lucid narration of the different

types of devoees, their different self-chosen altars and how the power of their devotion makes their desires fulfilled. The chapter concludes with a crisp statement indicating the integral all-comprehensive vision of the one Reality reached by the man of meditation.

The chapter opens with the Lord's promise. With mind solely attached to Me, O Partha, taking refuge in Me, and practising the Yoga of Meditation, how you will know Me fully, without any more doubt, to that please listen.

How can a finite mind ever comprehend the Infinite Truth? If this is not possible, then the entire theory of meditation is an idle mental comfort for fools to dream about. Spiritual life becomes purposeless, unproductive, wasteful. Krishna here promises that he will discuss how, when with devotion one fixes one's mind upon Him and steadily learns to meditate upon His Infinite Nature, one can realise the pure Infinite Consciousness. The Lord wants His students not only to hear but also to listen to him. Listening is active, dynamic, alert and creative hearing.

Elaborating His promise, Krishna adds, I shall give you the entire Knowledge, both speculative and practical, having known which,

The Art of Man Making

there will be nothing more to be known. The philosophical portion alone will read as too idealistic for an intelligent student. But when it is amplified with some practical ways and means of achieving the ideal, it becomes a complete science. When the study of the Science of Reality is complete, "there is nothing more to be known". The intellectual hunger to know makes the intellect dash out, searching, seeking, questioning, enquiring. All such intellectual quests cease the moment the all-satisfying total knowledge of the Reality behind the universe is realised.

If it is all so simple, why is it that in any given period of history there are just a very few who have, perhaps, realised this highest State of Perfection? Answering this plausible doubt Krishna says, Among thousands of men, one perhaps strives for Per- fection; and among those who strive, one perhaps knows

Me in My pure Essence.

There is a clear reason why so few come to realise the sure State of Perfection. The majority of us pursue the study of philo. sophy only to satisfy our vague curiosity to understand the world pattern and life's logic. Having gained but a dim superficial glance of the spiritual literature, we generally sit back satisfied with inadequate and barren knowledge.

Among thousands of such casual students, perhaps one may strive for attaining those perfections in themselves. Of thousands of such noble souls, perhaps one may really come to realise the Supreme in all Its infinite beauty. The student must have patience and perseverance. His sincere sadhana must first eliminate his vasanas, and only when in the end he is able to bring his entire attention to his meditation can

The Art of Man Making

he hope to get even a glimpse of the Self. Hence such men of complete direct realisation are so few and rare.

The Science is not wrong; the results are not forthcoming due to the powerful element of human error which is not easy to avoid in the spiritual quest. The seeker has to, by his own efforts, lift himself, from himself, all by himself, to reach the peaks of the Higher Consciousness.

But when one has a clear and full knowledge of the entire field, it clears the path, and fully warns us of all the possible pitfalls en route. Hence the need for a clear perception of life, in its tota- lity, and at its variegated play.





The world around you is only beautiful when you are at peace with the world within you.

Jivanmukta

Wandering In Himalayas

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Sannyasa Versus the Way of the Householder

Excerpts from the Travel Memoirs of Param Poojya Swami Tapovanji Maharaj

JIVANMUKTA

It is hardly worth stating that Buddhism, too, insists upon monasticism and solitude as indispensable devices for preventing the perpetual flow of the senses and the mind towards sensuous pleasures and for weaning them to the quiet performance of spiritual duties, and that the wide prevalence of monasticism in Buddhist countries like Tibet is the result of such insistence. Buddhism firmly believes that the householder's life is false and sinful.

Sivannulta

Practical-minded men have often asked in the past and still continue to ask, "Of what use to this world full of action, sustained by action, and propelled by action, are the sannyasins who have renounced the world and its activities to live immersed in samadhi and bhajan?" To this question, the sannyasins' answer is quite simple. Their very state of non-action is in itself a mighty blessing to the world. More than all the learned disquisitions of erudite scholars, more than all their profound treatises, the nirvikalpa samadhi of a sannyasin touches the heart of humanity

and elevates it to a higher plane. His desireless non-action does greater good to the world than the swiftest and the most frantic activities of the revolutionaries. What is more, sannyasa is mightier than armies and is boundless as the sea.



Yet there is nothing wrong if a householder, residing in his own house, tries to realize Brahman, even as a sannyasin does in his forest home. People of all castes and in all stages of life, in short, all human beings, are entitled to the enjoyment of spiritual bliss. It is their birthright. Spiritual realization is not impracticable even in the vortex of worldly activities, provided one has the necessary mental strength.

I am a sannyasin, who has, after the acceptance of sannyasa, made the Himalayas his abode-a great lover of solitude, engaged unintermittently in the contemplation of the Paramatman; a firm believer in sannyasa, not only as a desirable stage in human life, but as the holiest part of it, one who looks upon sannyasa as a miraculous means of converting worldly existence, which is generally regarded as sad and melancholy, into something full

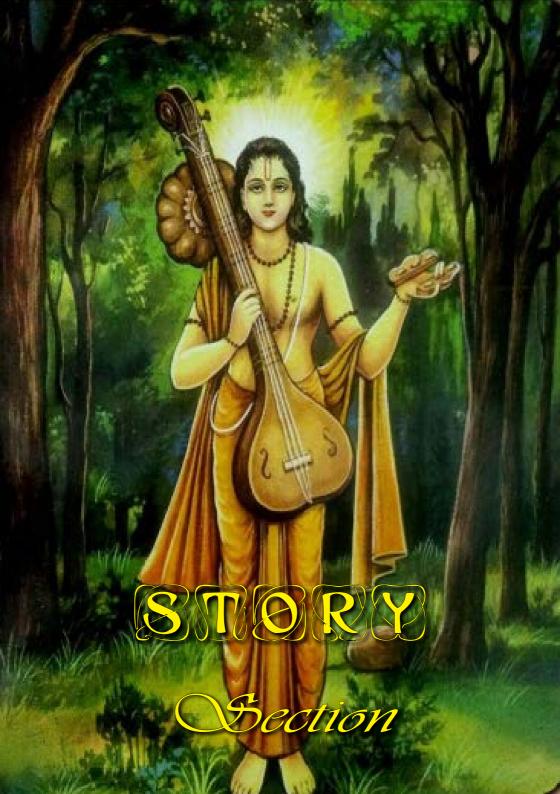
of bliss. I concede also that for certain people the very thought of the Soul is impossible until they have totally abandoned all distracting activities. That is all true. But in spite of all this I do not believe that householders are disqualified from leading a spiritual life or that people in various stages of life cannot meditate upon the Soul. In the midst of action, think of the Soul. Surrounded by wife, children,

and grandchildren, still think of the Paramatman with devout love.
Think, constantly, of the power that activates your hands and legs. Always use them to do things good and desirable. Do not allow yourself to be tempted by intoxicating wine. On the contrary, drink, drink your fill

of the Nectar of Life for ever more and find everlasting Bliss!

"Do not let anyone RENT SPACE IN YOUR HEAD unless they are a good tenant."

- unknown



5 GOLDEN ARROWS OF BHISHMA

hen the Kauravas were losing the battle, Duryodhana approached Bhishma one night and accused him for not fighting the battle to his full caliber because of his love for the Pandavas. Bhishma, greatly enraged, immediately picked up five golden arrows and chanted mantras declaring, "Tomorrow I will kill the Pandavas with these five golden arrows." Duryodhana, not believing Bhishma's words, asked Bhishma to give him supervision of

the five imbued golden arrows saying that he would keep them with him and return them the next morning.

Before when Pandavas were in living in the forest, Duryodhana once came to the forest to exhibit his material affluence in contrast with the Pandavas who were living in exile due to his wicked usurpation of their kingdom, thus displaying his venom and hubris. He placed his camp on the opposite side of a pond

where the Pandavas used to stay. Once, while he was taking bath in that pond, the heavenly princes, named Gandharvas, came to take a bath.

Duryodhana could not tolerate this; he had a fight in which the Gandharvas cap-

tured him. On the request of Yudhisthir, Arjuna saved Duryodhana and set him free. Duryodhana was ashamed, but being a kshatriya, he asked Arjuna what benediction or boon he would like. Arjuna replied that he would ask for the boon later when he needed it.

It was during that night that Krishna reminded Arjuna of his unsatisfied boon and told him to go to Duryodhana and ask for the five golden arrows. When Arjuna came and asked for the five golden imbued arrows, Duryodhana was shocked, but knowing full well his honor and duty as a kshatriya declared, "I will give you the five golden arrows. But can you please tell me who told you the five golden imbued arrows existed in the first place?" Arjuna replied with a smile, "Who else other than Shri Krishna

could have advised me?" Afterwards, Duryodhana honorably

kept his word and gave the five

golden arrows imbued with a lifetime of austerity and power by Bhishma. Later, Duryodhana broke his customary manner and conceded to himself privately, "All of the rishis say Krishna is the Supreme God, maybe they are right." Being shocked and convinced by Arjuna's knowledge of the very existence of the five golden arrows, Duryodhana secretly got on his knees and said a quick prayer to Krishna.

Duryodhana again went to Bhishma, informing him of all that happened and requesting another five golden imbued arrows. To this Bhishma laughed and replied, "That is not possible, child. The will of the Lord is Supreme and undeniable. I have already spent the merits of my lifetime of celibacy and austerity in those five arrows, potency strong enough to end all the five Panda-

vas. However, Krishna, being the

Supreme Lord has foreseen this,

5 Golden Arrows of Blishma

knowing past, present, and future as He alone can, and has thus arranged for you to voluntarily give up the five golden arrows, imbued with the power and potency of my lifelong austerities. I cannot imbue another five arrows, having spent all of the merits of my austerities. However, tomorrow I shall fight like a lion, and this time, either I will kill Arjuna or I will make Lord Krishna break His promise of not picking up any weapons during the war." On the next day there was an intense battle between Bhishma and Arjuna. Although Arjuna was very powerful, he was no match for Bhishma. Bhishma soon shot arrows which cut Arjuna's armour and then also his Gandiva bow. Arjuna was helpless before the wrath of the grandsire.



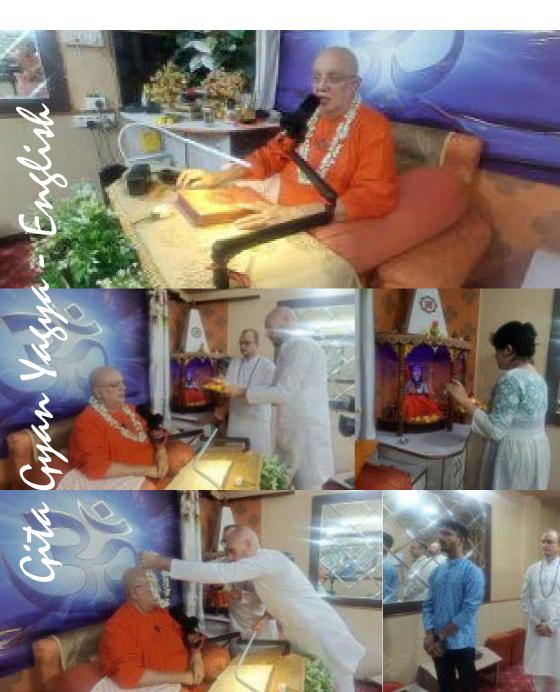


Mission & Ashram News

Bringing Love & Light in the lives of all with the Knowledge of Self







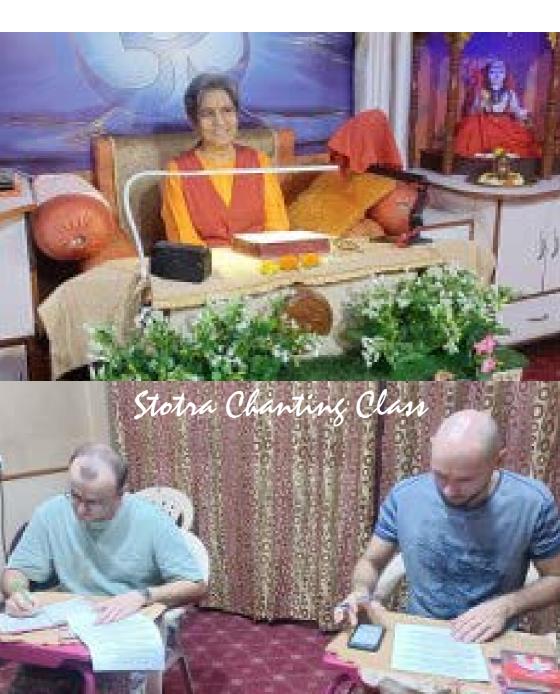






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Gita Chanting Class



Alexy & Timofy - from Russia





































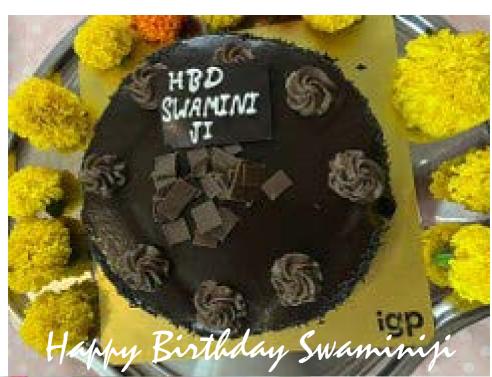
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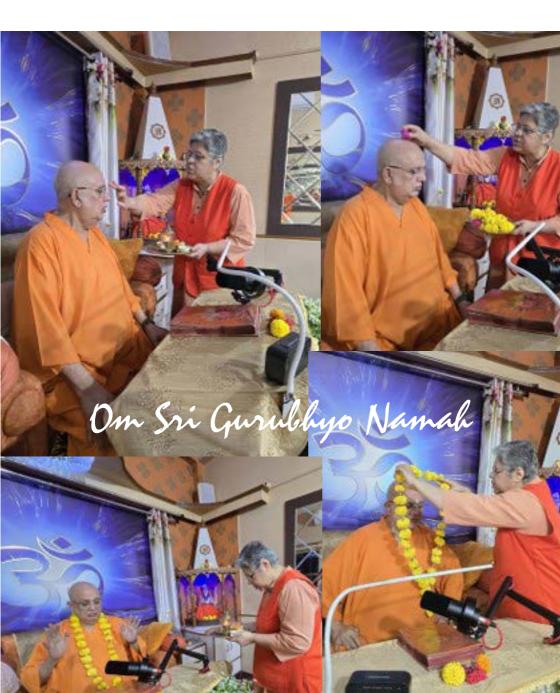






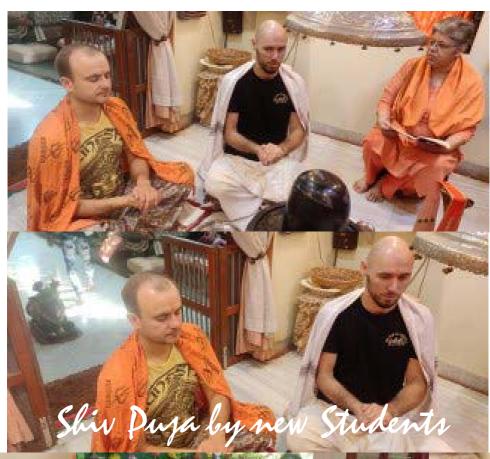


























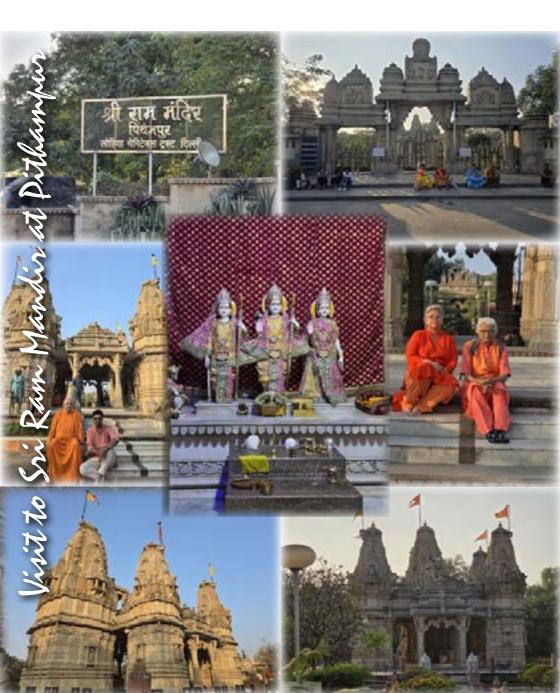






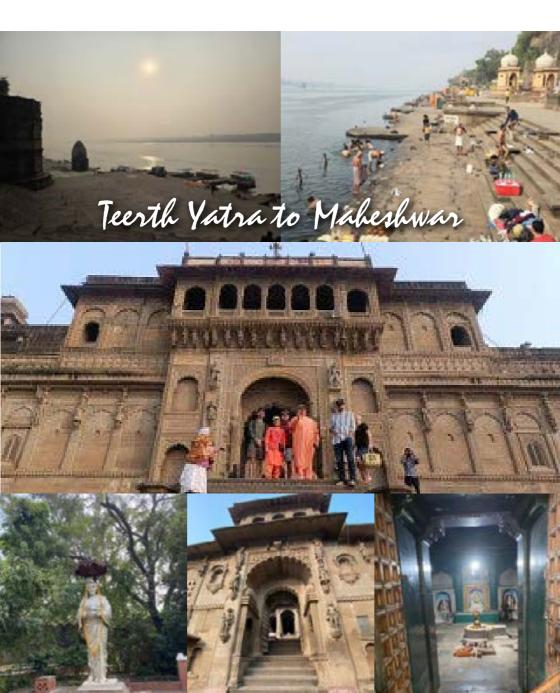
ASTRAM



















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By P. Swamini Amitanandaji

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